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Approved For Release 2006/11/13 : CIA-RDP79R00904A000500010090-9

21 April 1959

Collection of Information on KURDISH SITUATIONPROBLEM

To determine scope and significance of Soviet/Iraqi activities respecting Kurds,

BACKGROUND

Return of Barzani; CPI activity re Iraqi Kurds; reported posting of returned Kurds to Irbil, on access road to Mahabad (center of 1945 "Kurdish Republic"); unconfirmed reports of Soviet smuggling of arms into Iran, near Maku and Julfa; unconfirmed report of unusual number Iraqi Kurds in Mahabad, allegedly in connection arms smuggling from Iraq; Soviet pro-Kurdish propaganda campaign; vitriolic Soviet anti-Iran campaign; etc.

DISCUSSION

These and related activities are considered possible forerunner of eventual Soviet move to consolidate its position in Middle East. Specifically, Soviets may be paving way for creation of cadre of pro-Soviet Kurds in northeastern Iraq - northern Iran as preliminary line of action looking to establishment of a "Kurdish Republic". This entity, if established, would almost certainly be used to facilitate LOC to Iraq, thus providing Soviets with direct means of access/control over a prospective satellite.

The matter of "Kurdistan" immediately calls up critical questions on timing of Soviet actions re consolidation of Iraq. Early Soviet control of the Iranian land bridge does not appear feasible. While consolidation of Iraq is a possibility, definitive action, of a fait accompli nature, prior to the emergence of clear indications as to outcome of the Summit, would not appear acceptable to the USSR, on three counts: (1) action in an area so affected with vital UK national interests would most likely harden the UK Summit attitude, if it did not actually touch off British military action; (2) forthright Turkish, Iranian, and US reaction would probably be provoked; and (3) Nasser's anti-communist campaign would be assisted, with possible repercussions in Iraq itself.

One possible Soviet course of action is: to hold the threat to Iraq over British heads at the Summit, while keeping decisive action in reserve as a hedge against a Summit-gone-sour; to proceed meanwhile with organization of Kurds, coupled with other pressures against Tehran, in an attempt to secure the land bridge or, preferably, to bring about a new and more "pliant regime" in Iran which would provide the necessary guarantees re this land bridge.

RECOMMENDATION

Highest priority inter-agency collection effort be mounted soonest to determine source, scope, and rate of Kurdish build-up in and around northern Iraq and Iran; reactions in Tehran, particularly of military and politicians; Turkish attitude; Kurdish factions, leaders; etc.

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Remarks:

② to ③: Concur in Dr. Kent's proposed dist.
cfc

apdc will pass copy to DCI.

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3HH Admin	Apr 59

TRANSMITTAL SLIP		DATE
TO: <i>Mr. Kent</i>		
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REMARKS: <i>ONI tabled this paper at the Watch Committee yesterday, and Sheldon has made it a topic for "Critical Situation" discussion at USIB meeting Tuesday. It's too bad that our seminar and subcom did not lay this to rest. We will talk to [redacted] when he</i>		
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FORM NO. 241 1 FEB 55		REPLACES FORM 36-8 WHICH MAY BE USED. (47)

STAT

ACTING
MEMORANDUM FOR: THE/DIRECTOR

The attached memorandum summarizes a symposium held last week by the intelligence community under O/NE auspices. One conclusion is that no estimate on this subject is presently called for.

However, we believe it would be useful to distribute copies of the attached to those who participated in last weeks meeting for information only.

[redacted]
Sherman Kent

7 April 1959
(DATE)

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